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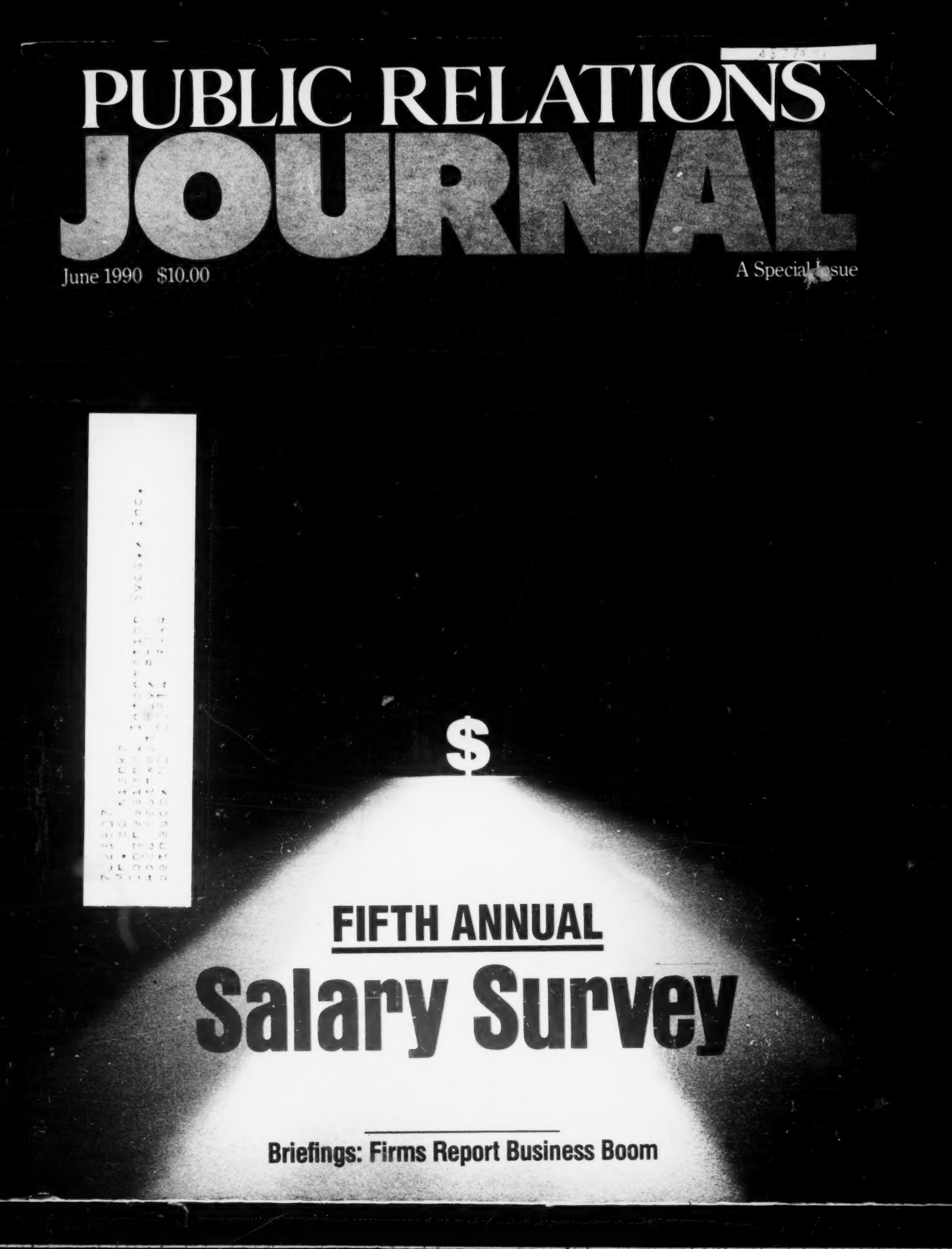

FIFTH ANNUAL
Salary Survey

Briefings: Firms Report Business Boom

PUBLIC RELATIONS JOURNAL

June 1990 Vol. 46 No. 6

FEATURE

18 ***PRJ*'s Fifth Annual Salary Survey:**
What's the median salary for your specialty, area or geographic region? How rapidly is compensation growing in the field? What's happening to the gender gap? *PRJ*'s first survey conducted via a systematically drawn, statistically representative probability sample, supplies the answers.

David Y. Jacobson and Nicholas J. Tortorello

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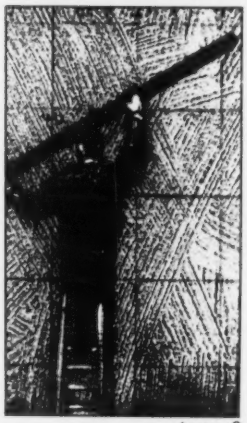

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Cover art: *Michael Simpson/FPG International*

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Compensation—monetary and otherwise

It's that time of year again, when a young (or not-so-young) practitioner's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of salary and compensation. Many readers tell us that they look forward each spring to *PRJ*'s annual salary survey results. We also get hundreds of calls during the year requesting additional copies of the survey findings.

This year, we've improved the methodology—we used a scientific sample and a mailed questionnaire, rather than the self-selecting magazine insert of the previous years. As a result, you can be sure that the results are truly representative of the entire 20,000+ *PRJ* subscriber base, and you can take into account the margin of error (less than + or – 3 percent).

We thank all 2,819 of you who responded to the questionnaire, providing us with an exceptional response rate of 43 percent and a strong foundation of data from which to draw comparisons each year in the future. We'll continue to refine the survey, so let us know if you have any suggestions about questions that might be asked or adjustments that might be made to better reflect the field's true compensation status.

As for this year's results, you may find the answers to our more subjective questions about attitudes as interesting as the salary data. It seems that, as a group, you are divided on whether your present jobs provide adequate opportunities for career growth, and on whether it's harder for women to reach the top in public relations. And more than half of you feel that public relations is a relatively low-paying field.

Be that as it may, many firm owners in various parts of the country are apparently doing very well these days. Several interviewed recently reported an upsurge in a wide variety of types of clientele in recent months. You can refer to the Briefing that begins on page 9 for details, including firm executives' opinions on why business is booming in so many specialties and geographic areas.

We'd also be interested in hearing from other firm practitioners—particularly ones whose regions or specialties *aren't* seeing such growth—and from those in corporations and organizations who can offer insights on how they are using firms now, as opposed to a few years ago.

On a more somber note, some practitioners are saying that the recent brouhaha over Hill and Knowlton's decision to represent the Catholic bishops in anti-abortion efforts is causing them to look more closely at how their own organizations deal with deciding which clients to represent or issues to take stands on *(page 9)*. With social issues coming back into the forefront of public debate, this process of self-examination may well prove to be healthy and invigorating for the field.

Karlene Lukovitz, Editor

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The Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) is an individual membership professional society of 14,983 public relations practitioners. Its major services to members include programs of Professional Development and Accreditation, an Information Center, publications, tracking of issues of national concern, and promotion of ethical practice through adherence to PRSA's "Code of Professional Standards." PRSA's mission is "To serve the public need for understanding and cooperation among its diverse interests by fostering high professional and ethical standards for all those practicing public relations."

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PRJ's Fifth Annual

Salary Survey

Median is $44,250; salary growth is slowing; gender gap persists

David Y. Jacobson and **Nicholas J. Tortorello**

Photograph: Clark Dunbar/Unlimited

Public relations practitioners have a median salary of $44,250, according to results of *PRJ*'s Fifth Annual Salary Survey. The survey confirms that salary growth for the field is slowing, and that, as in most fields, a gender gap in salaries remains a reality in public relations.

It also reveals that, as a group, practitioners have decidedly mixed attitudes about earnings and career opportunities in the profession. Slightly more than half say they feel that public relations is a relatively low-paying field. Readers are almost evenly divided on whether there are adequate opportunities for career advancement in their current jobs. And, as a whole, they are again just about split on the question of whether it is more difficult for women to reach top levels in public relations – although, when broken out by gender, women respondents are nearly twice as likely to say that it is harder.

Results are based on 2,819 responses, representing a 43 percent response rate.

This year, for the first time, the survey method used was a systematically drawn probability sample of all *PRJ* subscribers. In previous years, a self-selecting magazine-insert questionnaire was employed. The improved methodology ensures statistically reliable, representative data about 1990 salaries and career opportunities and provides solid baseline data for comparisons with future survey results. *(See "Survey method and sample description," page 21.)*

Stalled earnings growth

Because of the different methodology used this year, direct comparisons cannot be made, in most cases, between 1990 data and data from previous surveys. Median salaries, for example, cannot be compared validly. (Nevertheless – as a point of interest – the median salary found this year is 12 percent higher than that for 1989's self-selecting sample, which was $39,400.)

One area in which valid 1989/1990 comparisons can be made is salary growth in relation to cost of living increases, an independent indicator. On that point, there is reliable evidence that growth in public relations salaries is slowing.

Last year, respondents reported a median salary increase of 6 percent, which was 2 percent higher than the cost of living increase reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics for 1988 (4 percent). This year's respondents also reported a 6 percent median salary increase. However, this is only 1.2 percent greater than 1989's 4.8 percent cost of living increase. Moreover, one respondent in 10 to this year's survey reported either no increase in salary or a decline in pay relative to the previous year.

Title comparisons

At each level of job title, the highest median salary is likely to be found in corporate jobs, while the lowest median salary is likely to be found in government/health care/nonprofit organizations. *(See table, page 19.)* Public relations firms are in between, with median salaries that are closer to those in government/health care/nonprofit organizations at the account executive and senior management levels, and closer to that for corporations at the supervisor (middle management) level.

The median salary for account executives, (including junior and senior account executives, associates/representatives, and assistants) is $31,083 at corporations, as compared with $28,417 at public relations firms and nearly $26,000 in government/health care/nonprofit organizations. At the supervisor level, which includes account supervisors, supervisors/managers, coordinators, group managers, directors and vice presidents, the median salary at public relations firms is $47,928, which is closer to the median at corporations at this level ($51,232) than it is to the median at government/health care/nonprofit organizations ($38,940). The median salary for senior management (senior/executive vice presidents, senior counselors, chairmen/pres-

Salary by Title, Type of Organization and Gender

Job Titles	(weighted base)	median salary	% $45K+
All Respondents (all titles combined)	(2,819)	$44,250	48%
Account Executives (junior and senior account executives, associates/representatives, assistants)			
public relations firm	(174)	28,417	4
corporation	(125)	31,083	13
government/health care/nonprofit	(65)	25,931	6
men	(129)	32,910	18
women	(245)	26,970	3
Supervisors (account supervisors, supervisors/ managers, coordinators, group managers, directors, vice presidents)			
public relations firm	(215)	47,928	58
corporation	(944)	51,232	62
government/health care/nonprofit	(635)	38,940	34
men	(991)	53,885	69
women	(877)	38,299	32
Senior Management (senior/executive vice presidents, senior counselors, chairmen/presidents, partners, owners)			
public relations firm	(378)	63,360	70
corporation	(41)*	76,847	77
government/health care/nonprofit	(29)*	58,103	77
men	(310)	67,683	77
women	(134)	51,194	57

Nearly half (48 percent) of all practitioners earn more than $45,000. Not suprisingly, very few at the account executive level are in this ball park; the median salaries here fall between $25,931 (for government/health care/nonprofit) and $32,910 (for men). Medians for supervisors range between $38,299 (for women) to $53,885 (for men). In senior management, the range is from $51,194 (for women) to $76,847 (for corporate respondents). At each level, the medians for women and for those in government/ health care/nonprofit are the lowest.

Table excludes non-response to questions about job title and type of organization, as well as all "other" job titles.

*Caution: small base

idents, owners, partners) is higher at corporations ($76,847) than it is at public relations firms ($63,360) and government/health care/nonprofit organizations ($58,103).

At each job title level, the median salary of women lags behind that of men. On the account executive level, men earn 22 percent more than women. The salary gap widens at the supervisor level, where men earn 41 percent more than women, and then narrows to 32 percent at the senior management level.

Gender comparisons

As in past surveys of the field, the gender gap in salary is apparent at every level of experience. The gap is widest in the earliest years of a public relations career. The median salary for men with less than five years' experience ($31,993) is nearly $6,600, or 26 percent, higher than that for women with equivalent experience ($25,398). As the years of experience increase, the gap narrows slightly: men with five to nine years' experience, with 10 to 14 years' experience, and with 15 to 19 years' experience all earn median salaries that are 21 percent higher than those of their female counterparts. At 20 years or more experience, the median salary for men ($68,963) is 23 percent higher than it is for women ($55,898). *(See table, page 20.)*

Salaries: Men and Women, by Experience

	(weighted base)	median salary	% $45K+	received bonus	median bonus size	% men/ women
All Respondents	(2,819)	$44,250	48%	40%	$ 3,812	–%
men	(1,485)	53,637	66	45	6,057	53
women	(1,317)	35,933	29	34	1,911	47
1–4 Years' Experience						
men	(175)	31,993	14	38	1,334	12
women	(411)	25,398	4	36	924	32
5–9 Years' Experience						
men	(282)	44,158	47	44	2,860	19
women	(388)	36,520	19	31	1,561	28
10–14 Years' Experience						
men	(329)	52,721	69	45	4,862	22
women	(273)	43,668	46	34	3,282	21
15–19 Years' Experience						
men	(232)	60,781	86	45	11,607	16
women	(141)	50,104	62	38	5,649	11
20-plus Years' Experience						
men	(464)	68,963	85	48	10,099	31
women	(103)	55,898	66	37	10,876	8

Table excludes non-response to questions about length of experience and gender.

The median salary for men with less than 5 years' experience is 26 percent higher than the median for women at the same level. At higher levels of experience, the gap narrows to between 21 and 23 percent. At all levels, men are more likely than women to earn $45K+.

Men are more likely than women to earn $45,000 or more at all levels of experience. Again, the gap between the sexes is greatest among individuals with less than five years' experience. At that stage of their careers, men are 3.5 times more likely than women to earn $45,000 or more (14 percent for men against 4 percent for women). The gap begins to narrow thereafter. With five to nine years of experience, men are 2.5 times more likely to earn $45,000 or more (47 percent versus 19 percent). At 10 to 14 years of experience, men are 1.5 times more likely to earn $45,000 or more (69 percent versus 46 percent). But, even after 20 years or more in the field, men are more than 1.25 times as likely as women to earn above $45,000.

The salary gap is also apparent when the sexes are compared by age. *(See table, at right.)* The median salary for men under 35 years old is $37,355, which is $7,100, or 24 percent, greater than the median salary for women under 35: $30,218. The salary gap broadens after age 35. The median salary for men 35 and older, $59,150, is 35 percent greater than that for their female counterparts, $43,829.

Men under 35 are more than twice as likely to earn $45,000 or more (28 percent versus 12 percent). And, although 46 percent of women 35 and older earn $45,000 or more, 77 percent of their male counterparts are in that earnings group.

Women do report higher median salary raises: 6 percent versus 5 percent for men. With lower base salaries, however, the dollar amounts of raises for many women are still below those of men whose raise percentages were lower. Though the great majority of men and women reported receiving salary raises, the proportion of women receiving them is even higher (92 percent) than it is for men (87 percent).

Best/worst paying fields

Respondents were permitted to assign only one primary activity to their employer organization. Broadly speaking, private sector, for-profit activities pay more than public sector, nonprofit activities. The median salary for individuals in public relations firms (public relations counseling firms, solo practitioners and advertising

Salaries: Men and Women, by Age

	(weighted base)	median salary	% $45K+	received bonus	bonus size	% men/ women
All Respondents	(2,819)	$44,250	48%	40%	$3,812	–
Under 35 Years Old						
men	(324)	37,355	28	43	1,925	22
women	(689)	30,218	12	35	1,236	52
35 Years and Older						
men	(1,154)	59,150	77	46	7,684	78
women	(624)	43,829	46	33	3,588	47

Table excludes non-response to questions about gender and age.

Among public relations practitioners who are 35 years of age and younger, the male median salary is 24 percent higher than the female median. Among those over 35, the gap widens to 35 percent–and median bonus size for men is 114 percent higher.

Survey method and sample description

PRJ's previous annual salary surveys were self-selecting, using a postage-paid mail-back questionnaire inserted in the magazine. Therefore, a margin of error could not be calculated to determine how representative the survey samples were of all *PRJ* subscribers. In contrast, the 1990 survey was conducted with a systematically drawn probability sample of all paid *PRJ* subscribers in the 48 contiguous United States and the District of Columbia.

A questionnaire was mailed to one subscriber in three (for a sample total of 6,529), along with a letter asking recipients to respond in a postage-paid return envelope. The response was gratifyingly high: 2,819 completed questionnaires (a 43 percent response), resulting in a sample that represents the *PRJ* subscriber base with a margin of error of less than +/– 3 percent.

With the change to a more representative methodology, the statistics from this year's study cannot be directly compared to those of prior years, though the new method assures comparability in the future. Nonetheless, in a non-statistical way, the results of the 1990 survey are consistent with the general trends revealed in 1989's results.

Sample description

A statistical weighting procedure was used to bring representation of male and female respondents and of various geographical regions in line with the actual demographic makeup of the *PRJ* subscriber list as a whole. This standard weighting procedure enhances the representativeness of the data.

Consequently, though women represented 58 percent of those who responded to the survey, their responses were weighted down to represent 47 percent of the sample – their actual proportion within the *PRJ* subscriber list. Similarly, men, who constituted 42 percent of respondents, were weighted up to represent 53 percent.

Responses from the East were weighted up from 25 percent to 26 percent of the sample, while those from the Midwest were weighted down from 28 percent to 27 percent of the sample. On both an unweighted and weighted basis, the respondents in the South and West constitute, respectively, 25 and 20 percent of the sample. All of the percentages reported in this article represent the weighted data.

Forty-one percent of respondents are from the "corporate" sector (including manufacturing, utilities, finance, media/communications, scientific/technical, and travel/resorts/hotels/entertainment). Twenty-eight percent are in public relations firms (counseling firms, solo practitioners and public relations departments in advertising agencies), and 27 percent are in government/health care/nonprofit organizations (including religious/charitable, associations/foundations, and education).

By specific type of organization, the most widely cited employers are public relations counseling firms (19 percent), followed by industrial/manufacturing companies (13 percent), health care organizations (9 percent), financial/insurance companies and associations/foundations (8 percent each), utilities (7 percent), government, media/communications firms and advertising agencies (5 percent each), transportation/hotels/resorts/entertainment firms and solo practices (4 percent each), religious/charitable organizations and scientific/technical companies (3 percent each), miscellaneous services (2 percent) and education (1 percent).

As in past surveys, respondents were permitted to list multiple public relations specialties. The most widely cited specialties are media relations (81 percent), special events (70 percent) and publicity (69 percent).

Other widely cited specialties are corporate communications (61 percent), community relations (58 percent), marketing (52 percent), generalist activities (47 percent), public affairs (46 percent), employee relations (41 percent), issues management (40 percent), and advertising (40 percent). The least frequently mentioned specialty is investor relations (14 percent). As they did last year, respondents list an average of six specialties.

Breakouts by job title

By job title, respondents classified themselves as follows: assistant (2 percent), junior account executive (1 percent), associate/representative (5 percent), account executive (3 percent), senior account executive (2 percent), account supervisor (2 percent), supervisor/manager (22 percent), group manager (1 percent), coordinator/public relations coordinator (4 percent), director (26 percent), vice president (7 percent), senior/executive vice president (2 percent), senior counselor (1 percent), chairman/president (8 percent), partner (2 percent) and owner (1 percent).

Men in public relations tend to be older than their female counterparts and have more experience in the field, as well. Though median respondent age for the total sample is 38 years old, it is 42 for men, but only 34 for women. Similarly, the median number of years of experience for the total sample is 11 years, but for men, it is over 13 (13.45), which is nearly twice that for women (7.91 years). □

agencies) is $46,170; the median for public relations jobs in companies in manufacturing, utilities, scientific/technical, finance and insurance, media/communications, transportation/hotels/resorts/entertainment, and miscellaneous services is higher: $48,582. In contrast, the median salary for practitioners in government, health care, and such nonprofit fields as education, associations/foundations, and religious and charitable organizations is $38,268.

In four areas of primary organizational activity, more than half of the respondents earn $45,000 or more. These higher-paying activities include industrial/manufacturing, which, as in the past, has the highest median salary ($58,169), as well as public relations counseling firms ($50,377), utilities ($49,446), and scientific/technical activities ($45,200). The lowest-paying activity areas, in which median salaries are under $40,000, are, with the exception of transportation/hotels/resorts/entertainment, outside of the corporate sector. These include solo practices, public relations segments within advertising agencies, health care, education and religious/charitable organizations. In the latter two areas, the median salaries are, respectively, $31,415 and $31,289, which are considerably below the median for government/health care/nonprofit public relations jobs. *(See table, page 22.)*

Men constitute the majority of respondents in the higher-paying activities. The highest concentrations of men are in "smokestack" industries – manufacturing and utilities – in which the proportions of men are, respectively, 69 percent and 64 percent. The highest concentrations of women are in the lower-paying activities such as health care (69 percent), religious/

Primary Activity of Respondent's Organization

	(weighted base)	median salary	% men	% women	% $45K+
All Respondents	(2,819)	$44,250	52%	47%	48%
industrial/manufacturing	(373)	58,169	69	31	71
public relations counseling firm	(573)	50,377	57	43	57
utility	(190)	49,446	64	36	64
scientific/technical	(76)	45,200	58	42	50
financial/insurance	(221)	43,937	52	48	47
media/communications	(130)	42,089	50	50	44
miscellaneous services	(57)	41,485	49	51	42
association/foundation	(212)	40,958	48	52	41
government	(151)	40,622	56	44	38
solo practitioner	(102)	39,803	54	46	37
health care	(267)	38,620	31	69	31
advertising agency	(128)	38,608	54	46	34
transportation/hotels/resorts/entertainment	(102)	36,853	39	61	35
education	(35)*	31,415	54	46	19
religious/charitable	(92)	31,289	36	64	15
other	(102)	43,517	43	58	45

Table excludes questionnaires in which primary organization activity was not indicated.

**Caution: small base*

The median for public relations practitioners in industrial/manufacturing companies is 15.5 percent higher than that for those in counseling firms, the next highest-paid group. Association/foundation and government hover around the mid-range in terms of medians for the various organizational areas; the medians for educational and religious/charitable organizations are at the low end.

charitable organizations (64 percent), and transportation/hotels/resorts/entertainment (61 percent).

As with salary levels, the size of raises and the likelihood of receiving them vary by type of organization. In firms, respondents report higher median salary increases – 13.4 percent – than do respondents in corporations and government/health care/nonprofit jobs, where the median raise is 5 percent. But, whereas one respondent in five at firms did not receive a pay raise, the numbers of respondents receiving no raise within corporate (6 percent) or government/health care/nonprofit jobs (5 percent) are considerably lower.

Highest/lowest paying specialties

As in 1988, the highest-paying specialties are investor relations (median salary, $60,388) and issues management ($52,281). In IR, nearly three-quarters of respondents (72 percent) earn $45,000 or more. In issues management, 62 percent of the respondents earn at least $45,000.

Other areas with a median salary significantly above the overall median of $44,250 include public affairs ($49,077), generalist work ($48,217) and corporate communications ($48,146). The median salaries for several specialties are slightly above the overall median – notably, employee relations ($44,473) and media relations ($44,373). In other specialties, the median salaries are slightly below the overall median salary: marketing ($43,897), advertising ($43,726), community relations ($43,250), publicity ($43,245) and special events ($43,228). *(See table, page 23.)*

Size of organization

Over half (54 percent) of the respondents work in firms or departments with fewer than five public relations professionals. One respondent in six (16 percent) works in an organization with five to nine professionals. Another 12 percent work in organizations with 10 to 24 professionals, and 11 percent are in organizations with 25 or more professionals. (Seven percent did not indicate the number of professionals in their organizations.)

The likelihood of earning more money tends to increase with the size of a firm or department. In the smallest corporate departments – those with under five professionals – slightly less than half of the respondents (47 percent) earn at least $45,000. The proportion earning at least $45,000 grows to 62 percent in corporate departments with five to nine professionals, 70 percent in departments with 10 to 24 professionals, and 80 percent in departments with 25 or more professionals.

Similarly, in government/health care/nonprofit organizations, the proportion of respondents who earn $45,000 or more grows from 28 percent where there are fewer than five professionals in the department to 46 percent where there are five to nine professionals, 58 percent with 10 to 24 professionals, and 82 percent with 25 or more professionals.

In public relations firms, however, the proportion earning $45,000 does not increase steadily once firms have five or more employees. Less than half (44 percent) of the respondents at the smallest public relations firms make at least $45,000. That number rises to about 60 percent once a firm has five or more professionals. But above that staff size level, little changes, even at the largest firms (59 percent for firms with five to nine employees, 61 percent for firms with 10 to 24 professionals, and 60 percent for firms with 25 or more employees).

Region and salary

Pay is higher in the East than in other regions of the country. The median salary in the East is $47,586. The West ranks

second ($45,680), followed by the Midwest ($43,116) and the South ($41,332). The low median salary in the South may reflect the low cost of living in comparison with other regions. It may also reflect its high proportion of respondents working in the lowest-paying fields, government/health care/nonprofit organizations (32 percent in the South as compared to between 22 percent to 28 percent in other regions), as well as a low proportion of respondents who work in public relations firms (22 percent, compared to between 29 percent to 34 percent in other regions. *(See table, page 24.)*

Area of Public Relations*

	(weighted base)	median salary	% $45K+
All Respondents	(2,819)	$44,250	48%
investor relations	(394)	60,388	72
issues management	(1,124)	52,281	62
public affairs	(1,301)	49,077	57
generalist	(1,323)	48,217	55
corporate communications	(1,715)	48,146	55
employee relations	(1,153)	44,473	49
media relations	(2,288)	44,373	48
marketing	(1,475)	43,897	47
advertising	(1,116)	43,726	47
community relations	(1,633)	43,250	46
publicity	(1,947)	43,245	46
special events	(1,965)	43,228	46
all other	(354)	45,802	51

*Multiple responses permitted.

Investor relations continues to be the highest-paying specialty. Its median is 15.5 percent higher than that for issues management, the next highest-paying speciality. Generalists and those in public affairs and corporate communications have medians in the $48,000 to $49,000 range, while most other specialties' medians fall in the $43,000 to $44,000 range.

Bonuses and perks

Four out of 10 respondents (40 percent) reported receiving a bonus in 1989. The likelihood of receiving a bonus is higher among men (45 percent) than among women (34 percent), among respondents 35 or older (41 percent) than among younger respondents (37 percent), among respondents making $45,000 or more (50 percent, as compared to 31 percent for those earning less), and among respondents in corporations (47 percent) and public relations firms (46 percent) than among those in government/health care/nonprofit jobs (22 percent).

The size of the bonus varies considerably by gender, age, salary level and type of organization. The median bonus for men was $6,057, as compared to $1,911 for women. The median bonus for respondents under 35 was $1,396; it was four-and-a-half times larger for older respondents ($6,336). Among respondents earning $45,000 or more, the median bonus was nearly $8,000, while the median for those earning less was $1,209. The median bonus at corporations ($5,615) was twice that at public relations firms ($2,799) and four times that in the government/health care/nonprofit areas ($1,367).

The three most widely mentioned major perks received in the past year are "paid vacations" (41 percent), company cars and/or paid parking (15 percent) and stock purchase plans (10 percent). Paid vacations (which may be considered perks when time in addition to standard vacation time is granted, for example) are somewhat more likely to be mentioned by corporate respondents (44 percent) than by those in government/health care/nonprofit organizations (41 percent) and those in public relations firms (37 percent). But company cars and parking privileges are more likely to be reported by respondents in public relations firms (23 percent) than those in either corporations (13 percent) or government/health care/nonprofit organizations (11 percent). Stock purchase plans are more widespread among respondents in corporations (19 percent) than those in public relations firms (6 percent).

Types of perks received also vary by gender. Men are more likely than women to receive company cars (20 percent of men, 10 percent of women) and stock purchase plans (13 percent among men, 7 percent among women). Women are more likely to receive paid vacations (45 percent of women, 37 percent of men). These gender differences in perks may also reflect, in part, the fact that female public relations professionals on the whole tend to have less seniority than males.

"Satisfaction with career advancement opportunities is highest within firms"

Education/accreditation

Higher salaries appear to come with more education and APR accreditation. The proportion of respondents whose highest degree is a B.A. or B.S. and who earn $45,000 or more is 44 percent; the proportion of respondents with graduate degrees who earn $45,000 or more is 59 percent. Similarly, 70 percent of APR-accredited respondents earn $45,000 or more, as opposed to 53 percent for respondents who have the five years or more experience required for accreditation but are not presently accredited.

Attitudes toward public relations careers

This year, respondents were asked to agree or disagree with several statements about the public relations field. *(See table, page 25.)* A small majority (56 percent) agrees that "public relations is a relatively low-paying field." Not surprisingly, in light of the gender gap, agreement that public relations is relatively low-paying is more widespread among women (62 percent) than it is among men (50 percent). It is also no surprise that agreement is higher among individuals in the lower-paying activities of government/health care/nonprofit (60 percent) than it is among individuals in corporations (54 percent) and public relations firms (53 percent). Agreement is also more prevalent (63 percent) among younger respondents (those under 35) than it is among respondents over 35 (51 percent). The median salary of those who agree that public relations is relatively low-paying is $40,252 – four-fifths that of those who disagree with the statement ($50,599).

Respondents are almost evenly divided on the statement, "I'm satisfied with the opportunities for career advancement in my current firm or company." Fifty percent agree; 49 percent do not. Satisfaction with opportunities for career advancement

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Salary by Title and Region

	(weighted base)	median salary	% $45K+
All Respondents (all titles combined)			
East	(701)	$47,586	54%
Midwest	(777)	43,116	46
South	(707)	41,332	41
West	(566)	45,680	51
All respondents	(2,819)	44,250	48
Account Executives (junior and senior account executives, associates/representatives, assistants)			
East	(94)	29,497	6
Midwest	(103)	25,740	7
South	(91)	28,832	10
West	(85)	30,823	8
All "account executives"	(377)	28,949	8
Supervisors (account supervisors, supervisors/managers, coordinators, group managers, directors, vice presidents)			
East	(488)	48,578	57
Midwest	(500)	45,257	50
South	(500)	42,343	43
West	(348)	47,767	57
All "supervisors"	(1,878)	45,963	52
Senior Management (senior/executive vice presidents, senior counselors, chairmen/presidents, partners, owners)			
East	(135)	72,652	79
Midwest	(102)	63,025	71
South	(100)	56,778	65
West	(100)	60,636	69
All "senior management"	(499)	63,218	71

Table excludes non-response to questions about region and job title as well as respondents who wrote in "other" titles.

See box, page 25, "Survey method and sample description," for breakout of states included in each region.

The East remains the best-paying region, followed by the West, the Midwest and the South. The South has the largest percentage of practitioners in the lowest-paying fields: government, health care and nonprofit.

appears to be highest at public relations firms, where agreement with the statement is considerably higher (70 percent) than it is at either corporations (44 percent) or in the government/health care/nonprofit areas (39 percent). Satisfaction with opportunities for career advancement appears to be higher among men (54 percent) than it is among women (46 percent), but does not appear to differ significantly between those respondents who are under 35 years old and those who are older. The median salary of those who are satisfied with the opportunities to advance their careers ($48,065) is higher than those who are not satisfied ($41,237).

States in regional areas

For the purpose of this survey, states were grouped in the four regions as follows:

- East: Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, West Virginia.
- Midwest: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Wisconsin.
- South: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia.
- West: Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming.

Alaska and Hawaii were not included in the sample. Next year's survey will encompass these states.

Respondents are also split as to whether "it is harder for women than it is for men to reach the top in public relations." Among all respondents, 48 percent agree; 50 percent do not. The split follows gender and organizational lines. Women are nearly twice as likely to agree with this proposition as are men (62 percent, compared to 35 percent). Respondents in the government/health care/nonprofit areas are also more likely to agree (52 percent) than respondents in either corporations or public relations firms (45 percent) or corporations (47 percent). There is, however, no significant difference in agreement between respondents under 35 and older ones. The median salary for those who agree that women have a tougher time making it to the top in public relations ($43,192) is lower than the median salary for those who disagree ($45,409).

Respondents were also asked to indicate which of the following best describes their career goals: a career in a public relations counseling firm, a career in public relations with a corporation or nonprofit or governmental institution, or a career outside public relations.

It appears that respondents in public relations firms are more interested in switching to other types of organizations than are respondents on either the corporate or government/health care/nonprofit sides of the business. Among respondents already working in public relations firms, two-thirds (67 percent) want to remain on that side of the business, but the proportions of respondents in corporate and government/health care/nonprofit activities who want to stay in these areas are even higher (76 percent and 77 percent respectively).

Respondents in public relations firms are more likely to want to move to the corporate or nonprofit/government side of public relations (19 percent) than to leave public relations entirely (8 percent). In contrast, respondents on the corporate or nonprofit/government side are more likely to want to leave public relations entirely (14 percent among respondents in corporations; 13 percent among those in government/health care/nonprofit activities) than switch to a public relations firm (7 percent among respondents in both corporate and government/health care/nonprofit activities).

Interestingly, the median salary of those who want to move out of public relations entirely ($44,765) is not greatly lower than that of those who want to move to public relations firms ($46,159), and it's slightly higher than the median for those who want to move to a public relations job in either a corporation or nonprofit/government organization ($43,019).

David Y. Jacobson is vice president, and Nicholas J. Tortorello is chairman, of Research & Forecasts, which tabulated and analyzed the data for PRJ. *R&F is a division of Ruder Finn.*

Attitudes Toward Public Relations by Gender, Age, Type of Organization

				Age		Organization			
	total	men	women	under 35	35+	firm	corp.	govt./ health/ nonprofit	median salary
(weighted base)	(2,802)	(1,485)	(1,317)	(1,016)	(1,792)	(803)	(1,149)	(757)	–
"Public relations is a relatively low-paying field"									
agree	56%	50%	62%	63%	51%	53%	54%	60%	$40,252
disagree	43	49	36	37	47	46	45	39	50,599
"I'm satisfied with the opportunities for career advancement in my current firm or company"									
agree	50	54	46	48	51	70	44	39	48,065
disagree	49	45	53	51	47	27	56	59	41,237
"It is harder for women than it is for men to reach the top in public relations"									
agree	48	35	62	47	49	45	47	52	43,192
disagree	50	63	36	52	50	54	52	46	45,409

Table does not show percentage of respondents who are "no answer" for each statement.

Practitioners are about split on whether there are sufficient career opportunities in their current jobs, as well as whether or not it's harder for women to reach the top in public relations. People in firms are most likely to want to switch into corporate or other public relations areas; those in corporate and government/health care/nonprofit are more likely to be interested in leaving public relations all together.